

## EVALUATING TEACHERS BASED ON STUDENT ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

The teaching profession, unlike many other professions, has no control choosing their clientele (students). We inclusively accept “your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free”. Our students arrive to class with many variables that impact their ability to learn both negatively and positively. Examples of such variables include intelligence level, social/economic status, mental/physical health, personality, home environment, temporary stressors, and motivation level. At any given time, in any given classroom of 25 students there are two students going through their parents divorce, one who is gifted, two with learning disabilities, one who’s parent is dying of cancer, two with attention deficit disorder (who each have a personal behavior plan for the teacher to implement), one who is stressed because his Dad lost his job, one student with Autism, one student with English as his second language and two with diagnosed Anxiety Disorders. The other students remaining have intelligence quotients that range from 85 to 125 and various chronic and/or situational issues of their own, which may remain unknown to the teacher.

For some time it had been politically correct to accept that all students are different. What a concept. We implemented “Differentiation”, which is tailoring the curriculum to meet all the students, in each classroom, at their varying instructional levels. On the heels of this movement came the thrust to raise the standards and require all students to meet the same educational performance standards despite the spectrum of their unique variables. Finally, there are those who purport that teachers must have unilaterally decided to stop doing their job, thus becoming the explanation for the decline in student performance levels. Consequently, a collective group began to push for teacher evaluation to be tied directly to student academic performance.

Teaching is considered a “helping profession” and for none of the other helping professions, nor for many professions, is this connection even considered. Do we pay nurses according to whether their patient’s diabetes improved? Do stock brokers NOT make money if their clients’ portfolio declines? Do doctors get less pay if any of their patients died that year? Does your accountants’ rate go down if your taxes increase? Do psychologists get paid based on the self-esteem growth of their clients? NO. We see the futility of such a connection in these cases, then why not for teachers? Why would we think that a teacher, standing in front of 25 young faces, could possibly be the ONLY influence on whether each student pays attention, learns and remembers the information presented that day and every day?

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